



AUDIT COMMITTEE - 6TH NOVEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING (WHISTLE BLOWING) CODE

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Audit Committee on the proposed revision of the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Whistle Blowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns with the Council without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or embarrassment. This policy supports the Council's anti-fraud and corruption strategy.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Authority through this Committee has an obligation to maintain and monitor the standards of conduct throughout the Council's workforce.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The current version of the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy will be found within the Council's Constitution. In order to access the documentation Managers and employees were signposted to the Intranet where all policies are readily available to employees. Since early 2012 when the HR Portal went live the documentation has been readily available on the HR Portal. The current version of the Whistle Blowing Policy will be found at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The Policy was introduced in 2001 and there has been no significant changes made since that date, other than a minor review.
- 4.3 As part of the drive to strengthen and improve governance across the Authority all staff have been re-issued with the Officer Code of Conduct documentation.
- 4.4 In addition specific training is being delivered to all Heads of Service and third tier officers.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Members will be aware that Council agreed at its meeting in June 2013 to undertake a full review of the Council's Constitution.

- 5.2 The review is to be based on the new All Wales Framework document that has been produced by external lawyers with the support of the Welsh Local Government Association.
- 5.3 The Council has set up a Cross Party Members Working Party who meets regularly to discuss the review of the Council's Constitution. Additionally the new framework document is currently out to consultation with relevant Heads of Service across the Authority with a view to producing a Report to Council in the coming months on the adoption of the new document.
- 5.4 The new Framework document contains a new Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Code. A copy of the document is attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.5 Members views are sought on the new Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Code which will be fed into the review of the Constitution.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None directly arising from this Report, however the views of the Council's Equalities Officer will be sought prior to adoption of a new Code/Policy.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising from this Report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Improving Governance Project Board have been notified of the consultation to be undertaken.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members of the Audit Committee are asked to provide their views of the draft Policy.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To facilitate the implementation of a new Code/Policy.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000, Public Disclosure Act 1998

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Consultees: Improving Governance Board

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Current Policy
Appendix 2 Draft Policy